

12 MAY 2011

Fortnight

by Proto-type Theater

ate,
midnight and you are probably asleep, or at least on your way
ed. This letter is being written well before midnight, which is
strange thing about a handwritten note - the delayed gratification
it all. Of course, the delay is shorter today than it might have
seen 100 years ago when it could have taken a week for this letter
to get to you. In 2011, things move fast. It's simple. And because
it is being delivered by hand, you will likely read it soon anyway;
maybe at 12:00 am or it might be the next morning for you.

Strange how midnight is sort of halfway between today and tomorrow,
a time when things are neither here nor there. Things look different
in the haze of midnight. Or at least Bristol certainly feels different
at midnight on a Monday. It's an appropriate time to start then -
this is the beginning of two weeks spent looking at things differently,
wondering where here is.

How we communicate matters, so be sure to keep your phone on, check
your email and keep your eyes open to the world around you. A lot
will be happening over the next two weeks, but sometimes you'll
need to look carefully to see where it is.

Have a good night; or morning; or afternoon, depending on when
you find this.

Be in touch soon.

x

have something to say, or have seen something interesting in the
time of day or night), log in to the super secret
twitter.com using 'Mayfortnight'
password. It's like a

On 2 May 2011, a group of Bristolians engaged on a 14-day theatrical intervention into their daily lives that asked them to be creative, responsive and playful. They sent and received emails, SMSes, MMSes, post and tweets and visited interactive objects hidden throughout the city. This is a book that chronicles some of what happened.

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Fortnight is a Nuffield New Works Commission from Nuffield Theatre Lancaster. Commissioned by Mayfest and Watershed. Fortnight was a 2010 Theatre Sandbox Commission in partnership with the Bristol Old Vic and has been co-commissioned by Contact Theatre. Fortnight has received support from the National Lottery through Arts Council England.



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Fortnight explores how experience creates meaning and how a small change in perspective creates a massive change in outlook. It is a bespoke exploration of where we live and how we go about our daily lives.

This book documents how it unfolded in May 2011, in Bristol, as part of Mayfest.



Day One.

A hand-delivery of a felted badge and a hand-written letter at midnight.

At 9am, an SMS:

Morning [Name]. Hope you have found your delivery. It's starting...

A few moments later, an SMS:

Hello again. If you have time today, there is a red phone in the lobby of the Mercure Hotel on Redcliffe Hill (BS1 6SQ). Bring your badge and tap it on the phone book for a special message any time between 11am- 8pm.

In the lobby of the Mercure Holland House Hotel & Spa, a red phone asked participants questions about where the best place in Bristol is to do a variety of playful activities. The answers were recorded for later use...

At 9pm, an Email:

Subject: Space

Hi [Name],

Hopefully your bank holiday Monday was suitably relaxing. Maybe you went on a picnic, or visited a hotel, or lounged around the house in your pajamas. Whatever you did, you did it somewhere. That's obvious, of course...

Someone once suggested that all places are meaningless until someone uses them... they are simply geographic markers until they become a space for something. When you live somewhere for a long time, the places that you regularly pass through or only sometimes venture to, become marked by the things that happen there and become spaces that hold the memories (or potential memories) of how you use them. The longer you live somewhere, the more that the places that mark it on a map, turn into spaces filled with images, ideas, experiences.

Perhaps the metaphor 'I need a bit of space', then, refers to something other

than just the need for distance. Maybe a need for space could be about a need for meaning. Maybe tonight, as you think about sleeping (or tomorrow when you read this at breakfast, or whenever you check this email), you can find some space to imagine what potential meanings there are in the simple things you do often. It can become a game where you challenge yourself to imagine the visit to the local shop, the bus ride into town, or a visit to a gym, as more than something functional and instead something poetic. Imagine this:

The light in the sky is dim - it is either fading or rising, you aren't sure - and you are walking to the house of a friend. En route, you pass a bus shelter that you see every day. Sat waiting for a bus is a woman in blue trousers and a flowery pink top. She has a birdlike nest of hair and rich pink lipstick. You've seen her before. You could just pass her by, remarking to yourself that you recognise her, that you know she is often in this same area. Or. You could tell her that you like her hair or ask her the time, or simply say 'evening'. You do. You say 'evening' and she doesn't reply. Or. She says 'yes, of course it is'. You keep on walking.

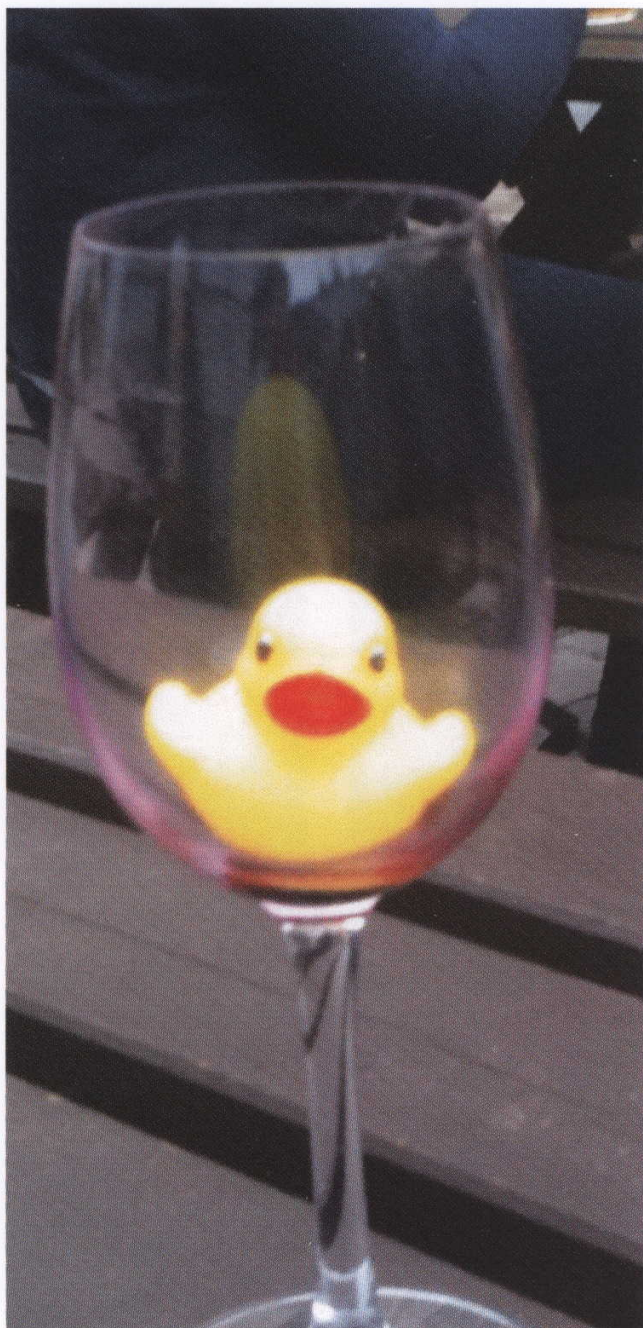
It isn't a substantial interaction; it's trivial, in fact, but now this bus shelter is marked by your interaction with the woman with the nest of hair. You know her voice. You know how she responds to people she doesn't know. It isn't substantial, and you might forget it as soon as it happens. But you don't have to... you could linger on the experience and allow it to change the flow of your movement. Maybe it could even erase some nagging thought in your brain, something unsettling. Maybe you can allow it to irritate you that she didn't respond the way you hoped she would. Regardless, even this tiniest thing makes a shift in how a place you know well transforms itself into a space of meaning.

You might think you know Bristol. You do, in fact. You know where the best place to see two old people kissing is. You know where the worst neighbourhood is. You know where the best place is to see a beautiful sunset. But what you know is only a fragment. The more you challenge yourself to shift how you move through where you move, the more the city will move you. Maybe this is obvious too.

Dream well, if you read this at night. Happy Tuesday, if you read this in the morning. If it's afternoon, or even evening on Tuesday, well, then, hopefully this email has put a brief pause on your day... long enough for a bit of spaciousness to emerge.

x

p.s. if you haven't already, you can tweet about your day using Mayfortnight as the username and [removed] as the password.



Proto-type Theater's
Fortnight
by:

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with

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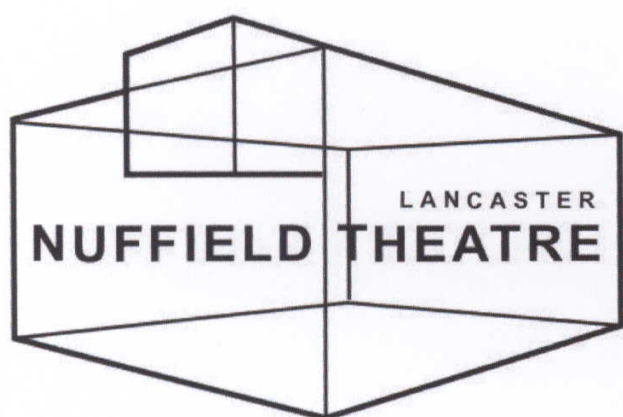
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Images in this book are from Proto-type, the participants and Adam York Gregory.

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Mayfest

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